Book Review

Nico Carpentier, Pille Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, Kaarle Nordenstreng, Maren Hartmann, Peeter Vihalemm, Bart Cammaerts, Hannu Nieminen Media Technologies and Democracy in an Enlarged Europe: The Intellectual Work of the 2007 European Media and Communication Doctoral Summer School

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http://www.researchingcommunication.eu/reco book3.pdf

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The book is organised in three parts, with the empirical chapters presented in Parts One and Two, while Part Three includes the research abstracts of all the doctoral students who participated in the 2007 European Media and Communication doctoral summer school. The empirical parts of the book are thematically arranged in sections and chapters are similar in length. Despite their rich and interesting content and their clear thematic classification, the chapters vary in quality, mainly due to the style of writing of the authors.

Section One puts the topic of the book in a wider context and addresses theoretical issues related to technology, democracy and policy. Denis McQuail gives an insightful theoretical overview of the relationship between communication and technology and proposes an analytical model that moves beyond technological determinism. Jo Bardoel offers a concise account of public service broadcasting (PSB) in Europe, while Hannu Nieminen focuses in particular on the EU's communication policies, proposing 'a democratic regulatory framework for European media and communication' (p.56). Very concise and to-the-point, this section offers a good starting point not only for specialists in the field of communication studies, but also for readers unfamiliar to the topic.

In Section Two the focus shifts to journalism, and particularly the democratising potential of online public communication and reporting. Auksė Balčytienė investigates the advantages that online information may offer in terms of improving the coverage of the EU by examining the relationship between journalists and EU spokespersons. Bertrand

Cabedoche maintains the focus on online communication, but shifts the analysis to the relationship between journalism and local authorities, by examining online municipal bulletins and proposing a 'four-logics' framework for public communication analysis (p.98).

The issue of participatory public communication is the focus of the next two sessions. Nico Carpentier proposes two theoretical approaches for the analysis of participatory media organizations, allowing for the complexity and diversity of such organizations to be factored in the analytical framework. Following this, three authors offer empirical insights into the role of participatory media organizations across different national contexts. Specifically, Andréa Medrado highlights the gap between normative approaches of conventional participatory media organizations and the actual service these offer, by examining the case of community television in a Brazilian favela. Bart Cammaerts evaluates the participatory potential of new media by focusing on blogs and their use as platforms for racist discourses in Belgium. Section Three closes with Tobias Olsson's research into the internet's political and civic implications, or 'Web 3.0', through the case study of an online network which 'remakes or removes advertisements from public spaces' (p.156).

Continuing with the theme of communication and participation, Section Four expands on the issue of participation and citizenship. The chapters included in this section are a mix of theoretical approaches (Turnšek; Sujon) and empirical research (Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt; Kleinen-v.Königslöw). The theoretical chapters in this section offer a concise account of the conceptual/normative debates that have developed in the area of participatory communication and citizenship over the past decade. The two empirical chapters contextualize some of the normative issues examined in this section, thus helping the reader to put abstract notions into a more practical context. Overall, this is a very good starting point for those unfamiliar with new media communication theories and public sphere discourses.

The concluding section of Part One of this book (Section Five) draws on empirical enquiry into media representations at cross-national/comparative and European levels. Looking at the issues of European cultural identity (Parés i Maicas); consumption of imported cultural products and identity-building at national level (Goban-Klas); and building public consent over foreign policy issues through media reporting (Halttu), the chapters in this section introduce the factors of culture and representation in the debate of media, communication and democracy.

Part 2 of the book moves beyond theoretical and empirical considerations onto methodological and meta-research issues of communication research.

All chapters in Section Six draw heavily on methodological issues covered during the Summer School's workshops. In addition to topics such as fieldwork research (Xin), discourse analysis (Phillips) and interviewing techniques (Kilborn), Section Six also covers more topical issues in

contemporary communication research methodology, namely internet research ethics (Jankowski and van Selm) and network analyses (Petrič).

The final section (Section Seven) moves in the area of meta-research, offering some theoretical considerations and practical insights into the role of communication researchers, in terms of interpersonal skills development (Laajalahti); research identity (Heinderyckx) and research organisation in Europe (Boddin *et al.*).

Although the aim of the book is to bring together different strands of research on the role of media in democratic processes, it is not very clear who the target audience(s) for this publication is/are, i.e. academics, policy-makers, policy advisors, other doctoral researchers in the field of media and communication studies. This is because a significant part of the book is devoted to the Summer School, its processes, outcomes and aims. As a result, the book vacillates between a report and a scholarly publication. Nevertheless, the clear thematic structure allows for readers to follow the issues examined here with relative ease, as it helps maintain a flow throughout the book and cohesion between the media and political communication theories examined here, the relevant empirical findings and the methodological issues concerning communications research. The extensive bibliography at the end of each chapter provides a great source for further reading in the areas of political communication and media-enabled democratic governance and participation.
